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BRADFORD'S CONVERSION

By CECILY ALLEN

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"George Bradford, purchasing broker," read the girl, hesitating before the door. She extracted a tiny newspaper clipping from her purse and re-read it:

Wanted.—A stenographer; male preferred. 16 Exchange place. G. B.

With trepidation she opened the door and entered a small, unprepossessing office room.

"Good morning," said Bradford, rising and then sitting down abruptly. Business was business.

"Mr. Bradford?" asked the girl, handing him the clipping. "This is your advertisement, I believe."

"I—I had in mind a young man," began Bradford, obviously ill at ease. He had never associated with women, either socially or in business. In the latter capacity he had strongly disapproved of the sex; in the former—well, he was determined to make money first and love afterward.

"Yes, 'male preferred' is stated in your advertisement," acknowledged the girl, "but I wanted a position, my first one, very much, and—well, I've come to see if fate will be kind."

It was just like a girl to introduce such flimsy, uncertain elements as fate into business! And yet Bradford was not so prejudiced as he had been ten minutes before. He fancied the dingy office was brighter already. Then there was another consideration—women demanded smaller remuneration for their work, and this was still a matter of moment with Bradford.

"This—er—you say is your first position?" ventured Bradford, admitting unconsciously that the place was hers already.

The girl saw this, but was too tactful to give evidence of the fact. "Yes," she said. "I have just finished my course in stenography."

Bradford liked her soft, well modulated voice. It would sound well to his customers over the phone. A man's voice would not sound half so well.

"Office work is confining," he suggested by way of discouraging her.

"Yes; but when a woman has to make her way in the world she puts on a smile and faces the worst," she replied, with just a suspicion of an accent on the last word and with an undeniably roguish twinkle in her eyes. She could not quite cast aside the manner that had been her charm in the old life. Family fortunes may take wings and fly, but innate coquetry is not to be stifled by mere financial depression.

Bradford could not deny that her smile had individuality. He wondered why the women he had been forced to meet had never smiled in just that way. He never knew why, but he suddenly wished the office were cleaner. He would certainly speak to the woman who scrubbed and dusted in the building.

"And—about—about salary?" he asked awkwardly. It was all rot—this women in business idea. They had no right there. He would have a man. He felt like a cad talking to a woman about salary. What did she know of business?

"I believe it is the employer's prerogative to name the salary," said the girl simply.

Bradford, after searching hopelessly in his mind for a combination of words and figures in which to adjust the financial end of the transaction, named the amount which he had had in mind when inserting the "ad."

"That will do very nicely," said the girl, rising. After all, this business life was not so hard; men were not so heartless.

"And your name?" asked Bradford.

"Henderson—Marjorie Henderson," she said, smiling.

"And when will you come?" Bradford surprised himself at the way in which he let her suit her own convenience.

"That, too, is your prerogative," she replied, an odd little expression of deference in her eyes.

"Tomorrow? Is that too soon?" He had not expected to have his stenographer until the following week, but, after all, no doubt the sooner he had one the sooner his business letters would commence to bring good results.

"Very well, tomorrow. And at what hour?" This man had not told her anything of his demands upon his employees. She had fancied herself departing with a list of rules a page long, to all of which she must adhere rigidly.

"Oh, about 9.30," he said. He had decided when he had inserted the advertisement that he would get to business earlier and have his stenographer there with him. But—oh, well, women should not have to get down too soon. It was hard on them.

"I will be here at that hour, Mr. Bradford, thank you." And she closed the door.

Alone, Bradford lit a cigar and leaned back in his desk chair. What had he done? He had engaged a woman, a girl, as a stenographer! She would always be in the office. He could not swear; he wondered if he should smoke. Neither could he take off his coat and put his feet on his desk when he wanted to think things out and bring an unruly customer to time.

But the next morning found him eagerly waiting for 9.30. He could not tell why, but the appearance of a trim little tailor clad figure in the doorway

made him glad.

"I—I may put my hat on your desk?" she asked, laying a neat felt hat on the top of his desk. She had only a flat table.

"Oh—oh, no," he said. "Let me—I say, we will have to have a hook over there above the washbowl. Yes, put it there." What a nuisance women were, he tried to convince himself. A woman's hat on a man's desk!

An atmosphere of strangeness, of embarrassment and awkwardness filled the tiny office all day, and yet Bradford did not look at the dirty, dingy elevated road for light as he had been accustomed. It was brighter in the office. He dictated his letters and was pleased to note their faultless pages, their neat arrangement, their workmanlike appearance. Perhaps, after all, a woman could learn to be businesslike.

"I will bring a little mirror and—a towel and some soap in the morning, Mr. Bradford, if you don't mind," she said as she left. "Good night."

"A mirror!" Bradford sighed. This was only the beginning. But he was always glad when 9.30 arrived and sorry when closing time came. Business seemed to increase; he sent out so many letters. Miss Henderson was in the quick, and often she suggested little ideas for featuring goods he was advertising and quoting.

When she asked if she might have a box of flowers in the narrow window Bradford put his hands in his pockets and strode up and down the room. But she had her way, and soon a box of blooming nasturtiums gave the dingy room a cheerful aspect. Every morning before he was ready to give her his letters she watered them with a ridiculous little red watering pot.

Often after Miss Henderson had left in the evening Bradford stood over the tiny flower bed and soliloquized. How different the office seemed! How bright and clean his desk always looked! How much the mirror added, and the clean towel, and—and these flowers! They grew and bloomed happily under her care. What would not?

"Miss Henderson," began Bradford one afternoon when she was leaving early, "I am glad I added the word 'preferred' to my advertisement for a stenographer three months ago."

The girl looked surprised, but she was not.

"If I had simply said 'male' you would never have ventured to apply." He twisted his penwiper—one she had made him—into an unsightly string.

"Yes?"

"I—I have never approved of women in business."

She put her hatpins in carefully, slowly. "No?" she intimated by an elevation of her brows.

"Nor—nor anywhere," he confessed. "I've always argued to the contrary."

"But argument does not prevail in anything which matters seriously," admitted the girl.

"And this matters seriously, Marjorie," he said, moving toward her. "It matters awfully. I have to have one in business and—everywhere. Will you let me have her? I know it isn't businesslike, but—I love you."

Marjorie Henderson looked at him squarely in the eyes. "And I prefer a partnership to a salaried position. You come to the house tonight, and we'll talk it over with mother. It need not be all business then."

Bradford had a little "want" advertisement framed above the desk in his private office today, right over her photograph, for the business has grown, and there are many clerks—but all "male preferred."

He Went to His Station.

The story is told by a former western hotel clerk of the trials of a French head waiter with an untrained Nebraska youth assigned to him for service in the dining room. The youth had been reared on a ranch, but his father and the proprietor of the house were lifelong friends, and, as a favor to the father, the boniface had promised to give the boy a chance. He appeared in abbreviated jeans, and when presented to the full dressed Parisian who presided in the dining room the latter looked him over and, with obvious misgivings, said, "I think he is a little difficult." Nevertheless the recruit was put into the garb of the guild and his zone of activity defined. He was also impressed with the necessity of prompt and unquestioning obedience to orders. The dinner hour arrived, and the direction was given, "Go to your station." Not his to reason why, but blindly to obey, the yokel waiter disappeared. The hour was 1 o'clock, and two and a half hours later he made his reappearance and then explained that he had understood the order, "Go to the station." He had been watching the trains go by and wondered what useful service he was rendering. His connection with the waiter corps was terminated, and he became an assistant baggage wrestler in the porter's room.

Cheated Death.

Kidney trouble often ends fatally, but by choosing the right medicine, E. H. Wolfe, of Bear Grove, Iowa, cheated death. He says: "Two years ago I had Kidney Trouble, which caused me great pain, suffering and anxiety, but I took Electric Bitters, which effected a complete cure. I have also found them of great benefit in general debility and nerve trouble, and keep them constantly on hand, since, as a find they have no equal." Chas. Rogers, druggist, guarantees them at 50c.

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Astorian Free Want Ads.

Anyone Desiring a Situation can Insert an Advertisement in this Column of Three Lines Two Times Free of Charge.

<p>MISCELLANEOUS.</p> <p>CALL FOR WARRANTS.—NOTICE is hereby given to all parties holding Clatsop County warrants, indorsed prior to June 1, 1904, to present the same to the county treasurer at his office, 590-592 Commercial St., for payment. Interest ceases after this date. CHAS. A. HEILBORN, County Treasurer.</p> <p>Dated, Astoria, Oregon, this 27th day of March, 1905.</p> <p>OLD PAPERS FOR SALE AT THIS Office; 25c per hundred.</p> <p>ROOMS WANTED.</p> <p>HOUSE OF 6 OR 8 ROOMS WANTED in good neighborhood. Convenient to center of town; rent reasonable; permanent. Address Emil Held, care The Astorian.</p> <p>SITUATIONS WANTED.</p> <p>WANTED—MAN AND WIFE AS cooks in logging camp or saw mill. Inquire Sam Harris, Ninth and Bond.</p> <p>FOR SALE—MISCELLANEOUS.</p> <p>INCUBATOR FOR SALE—400 EGGS capacity; also three 100 capacity brooders; first-class condition. Address A. Astorian Office.</p> <p>FOR SALE—STEAM TUG IN FIRST-class condition; terms reasonable; suitable for seining purposes. For particulars apply at this office.</p> <p>SCOW FOR SALE AT M'GREGOR'S mill, 22x64; would make a good fish scow. Inquire of Dan Gambel at mill.</p>	<p>FOR SALE—REAL ESTATE.</p> <p>160 ACRES OF FIRST CLASS TIMBER land for sale, in Pacific county, near Columbia river. Address Box 630 Astoria, Ore.</p> <p>FOR SALE—LOT 1, BLOCK 14, Adair's Astoria; for particulars write to J. P. Miller, Onieda, Wash.</p> <p>WANTED—ENERGETIC, TRUSTWORTHY man or woman to work in Oregon, representing large manufacturing company; salary \$40 to \$90 per month; paid weekly; expenses advanced. Address with stamp, J. H. Moore, Astoria, Ore.</p> <p>HELP WANTED.</p> <p>WANTED—COMPETENT WOMAN cook. Apply at 598 Commercial; up stairs.</p> <p>WANTED—GIRL TO DO GENERAL housework. Apply at 247 Bond St.</p> <p>LADIES CAN FIND STEADY AND profitable employment; yearly contract; small capital required. Call at Occident Hotel bet. 8 and 10 a. m. and 5 to 9 p. m. this week. G. S. Halley.</p> <p>WANTED—MEN TO LEARN BARBER trade; 8 weeks complete; positions guaranteed; tuition earned while learning. Write for terms. Moier's Barber College, 644 Clay St., San Francisco.</p> <p>LOST AND FOUND.</p> <p>IMMIGRATION CERTIFICATE NO 54446, in name of Chong Hon Tin, No. 8346; anyone returning to Hop Hing Lung Co. will receive \$5 reward.</p>
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